

110TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. CON. RES. 428

Expressing the sense of Congress that the United Nations should take immediate steps to improve the transparency and accountability of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) in the Near East to ensure that it is not providing funding, employment, or other support to terrorists.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 24, 2008

Mr. ROTHMAN (for himself, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Ms. BERKLEY, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. ISRAEL, and Mrs. TAUSCHER) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of Congress that the United Nations should take immediate steps to improve the transparency and accountability of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) in the Near East to ensure that it is not providing funding, employment, or other support to terrorists.

Whereas the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) was established in 1949 as a temporary agency to provide relief services to Palestinian refugees and is the only United Nations agency dedicated to one specific group of refugees;

Whereas UNRWA's definition of refugees includes not only the Palestinian refugees themselves, but also their descendants, resulting in a more than 400 percent increase in the number of beneficiaries from 900,000 in 1950 to 4,500,000 today;

Whereas since 1950, the United States has contributed more than \$3,400,000,000 to UNRWA and is the largest single donor to this United Nations organization;

Whereas as of September 2008, the United States has already contributed \$148,000,000 to UNRWA for fiscal year 2008;

Whereas UNRWA employs approximately 24,000 staff to care for a population of 4,500,000 registered refugees in camps located in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, and the Palestinian Territories;

Whereas, in contrast, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the agency tasked with resolving refugee problems worldwide, employs approximately 6,300 staff to care for a population of 11,400,000 refugees worldwide;

Whereas despite the Israeli Defense Forces' (IDF) military disengagement from Gaza in 2005 and the 1993 creation of a Palestinian Authority that has jurisdiction over the Palestinian refugee camps in Gaza and the West Bank, UNRWA remains the primary professional, medical, educational, and social service provider for Palestinians living in "refugee" camps in the Palestinian territories;

Whereas according to UNRWA Report of the Board of Auditors for the biennium ended December 31, 2005, UNRWA does not track recording, deleting, renaming, or manipulation of financial information by staff members

or volunteers, and therefore has no means of detecting the alteration of financial data or other types of redirection of UNRWA funding, leaving UNRWA unable to technically comply with section 301(c) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, which ensures that no United States tax dollars support terrorism;

Whereas UNRWA has employed staffers affiliated with terrorism, including Said Sayyam, the Hamas Minister of Interior and Civil Affairs, who was a teacher in UNRWA schools in Gaza from 1980 to 2003; Awad al-Qiq, the headmaster of an UNRWA school in the Gaza Strip who also led Islamic Jihad's engineering unit that built bombs and Qassam rockets; Nahed Rashid Ahmed Atallah, a prior senior UNRWA employee from 1990 to 1993 who was responsible for the dissemination of assistance to refugees while he was also an operative of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine; and Nidal Abd al-Fattah Abdallah Nazzal, a Hamas activist employed as an ambulance driver by UNRWA, who confessed in 2002 to transporting weapons and explosives to terrorists in an UNRWA ambulance;

Whereas schools administered by UNRWA have reported to have produced several graduates that have gone on to careers affiliated with terrorism, including Hamas Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh, and Abd al-Azis Rantisi, the former Hamas chief;

Whereas schools administered by UNRWA have used classroom materials that glorify or honor terrorists or terrorism in the past, and continue to use textbooks that include biased and negative references to Jews and the State of Israel, or omit any reference of Israel's location on a map entirely;

Whereas in 2004, Peter Hansen, then-Commissioner General of UNRWA told Canadian Broadcasting Corporation TV Network, “I am sure that there are Hamas members on UNRWA payroll and I don’t see that as a crime.”;

Whereas in 2006, at a Congressional briefing UNRWA Commissioner General Karen Koning AbuZayd admitted to not checking the names of those who receive financial aid from UNRWA against any terrorist watch lists, noting that it would be too difficult because “Arab last names sound so familiar”;

Whereas, on March 16, 2007, the New York Times exposed a new al-Qaeda cell, Fatah al-Islam, that was organizing, training, and plotting attacks against the United States from an UNRWA-administered and run camp in Lebanon; and

Whereas United States taxpayer dollars should never be used for purposes of supporting terrorist cells or activities that support terror or promote a culture of hatred at any of its locations: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
2 *concurring), That Congress—*

3 (1) strongly urges the Secretary of State to
4 take all necessary measures to certify that United
5 Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian
6 Refugees (UNRWA) operates in full compliance with
7 section 301(c) of the Foreign Assistance Act and
8 therefore, no American taxpayer dollars are being di-
9 rected to terrorists or to further terrorist propa-
10 ganda;

1 (2) calls on UNRWA to improve their trans-
2 parency by publishing online copies of all educational
3 materials used in UNRWA-administered schools;
4 and

5 (3) urges UNRWA to improve their account-
6 ability by implementing terrorist name recognition
7 software and other screening procedures that would
8 help to ensure that UNRWA staff, volunteers, and
9 beneficiaries are neither terrorists themselves, nor
10 affiliated with known terrorist organizations.

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